Development of Major Ports

†2341. SHRI ABHAY KANT PRASAD: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the absence of any major port in the country the development of trade and shipping has been constantly slowing down;

(b) whether Government have any Plan for development of any major port along the eastern ghat;

(c) if so, whether any port has been selected for this purpose;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the norms adopted for selection of the port to be developed as a major port?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) No Sir, Since there are 12 major ports in the country.

(b) to (e) No new major port has been identified for development. There are already 6 major ports along the country's east coast at Kolkata/ Haldia, Paradip, Visakhapatnam, Ennore, Chennai and Tuticorin. An outlay of Rs. 2109.66 crores has been approved for the development of these ports during the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07).

Tonnage of the Indian Merchant Shipping

2342. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tonnage of the Indian Merchant Shipping fleet has declined by 9.43 per cent in the very first year of the Tenth Plan between the period from 1st April, 2002 to 1st April, 2003 whereas the fleet size has gone up by 10 per cent during the same period;

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to make up the shortfall in order to avoid financial losses to the shipping companies; and

(c) whether bigger vessels are being discarded to provide tonnage to the new vessels being inducted in the fleet?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) (i) The Government has taken various measures to make up the short fall during the recent years. A committee headed by Shri Rakesh Mohan was appointed to review Indian shipping and recommend measures for its revival. The modalities for introduction of Tonnage Tax are being discussed with the Finance Ministry and a sub-committee comprising six members, two members each from Ministry of Shipping, Central Board of Direct Taxes and Indian National Shipowners' Association has been formed to finalize the modalities of the poposed fiscal regime and try to structure the required legislation regarding Tonnage Tax. The sub-committee is having its meetings at frequent intervals to give final shape to the draft legislation on Introduction of Tonnage Tax.

(ii) In the Finance Act, 2002, scope of Section 33AC was enlarged to twice the aggregate amount of the paid-up share capital, general reserves and the amount credited to share premium account.

(c) No, Sir. Only the over aged vessels, which may also include bigger vessels are scrapped from the fleet.

Transit accommodation for ship passengers at Kolkata

2343. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andaman and Nicobar administration has decided to provide transit accommodation at Kolkata for ship passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the amount spent thereon;

(c) whether it is a fact that after incurring expenditure, the department is examining the possibility of shifting operations from Kolkata to Haldia and;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the justification for making such unfruitful expenditure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI DILIP KUMAR MANSUKHLAL GANDHI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.